

Abstract 490

TITLE: The Effects of Abstinence-Only Sex Education Methods on Sexual Behaviors and Attitudes in High-Risk Teenage Males

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: African-American teenagers are more likely to become pregnant or experience an STD. The objective of this study was (1) to develop a test instrument to identify sexual attitudes and high-risk behaviors, and (2) to determine the ramifications of specific sexual behaviors and attitudes when there is a policy of abstinence in the educational setting. The purpose of this study is to determine responsible program choices to minimize high-risk behavior.

METHOD: A random group of 21 African-American males attending public school in Clark County, Nevada. The data was analyzed using correlation techniques to assess the effect of sexual attitudes on sexual behavior in this high-risk population. Validation methods for the instrument are also presented.

RESULTS: The male teenagers involved in this study attend public high school in Clark County, Nevada. The district has a strict policy of teaching abstinence, relying on parents for the remaining education. Media education regarding condom use appears effective, as all respondents knew latex condoms could prevent STDs. In this study, however, 33% of the participants had made a partner pregnant, and 10% have had an STD, significant because the average respondent was 16 years old. Parents' influence did not decrease pregnancy chance ($r^2 = .939$) and parental marital status did not decrease risk either ($r^2 = .866$). A history of condom breakage was associated with increased pregnancy ($r^2 = .939$) as well as multiple partners ($r^2 = .919$) and the frequency of sexual activity ($r^2 = .901$). Condom breakage was also associated with the belief that additional lubricants should be oil-based ($r^2 = 1.0$). When asked about the specific lubricant, it was associated with Vaseline ($r^2 = .863$).

CONCLUSIONS: Based on the learning paradigm, strong sex education is required in the school setting since most sex information education is derived from schools or friends, not parents. Thus, identification of desirable and/or undesirable behavior must come from outside the peer group. Parental influence is pronounced in culturally based behavior (i.e., homosexuality), but usage must be educationally correct.

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